



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Public Health Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, MSN, DMHAS

DATE: March 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on House Bill 6279

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Patricia Rehmer, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and I am writing to today to address HB 6279 AN ACT CONCERNING PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND THE RETURN OF UNUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

While DMHAS is supportive of all efforts to address the opioid epidemic facing Connecticut citizens, we would ask that the Committee look at the HB 6856 AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION which is the bill submitted by the Governor to address this issue in a much more comprehensive fashion. Opioid abuse is a growing public health concern. Fatal overdoses resulting from the use of opioids (heroin and prescription drugs) have been steadily increasing over the last few years.

The Governor's office convened a group of state agencies, provider organizations, and advocacy groups that came together after attending a policy conference this summer that focused on the opioid epidemic in a number of states. This group worked over the fall to put together a comprehensive package of statutory recommendations and those are contained HB 6856.

Training for health care professionals, using the prescription drug monitoring program, and allowing pharmacists the ability to dispense NARCAN are critical pieces of the Governor's legislation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.